

REMARKS

Claims 12-21 are all the claims pending in the application. Claim 17 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 22, which has been canceled, and based on Table 1 of the Examples in the specification.

Entry of the above amendments is respectfully requested.

II. Rejection of Claims 17-20 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 17-20 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Higo in view of Claessens and Fujita.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

It is respectfully submitted that It is respectfully submitted that the claimed process and composition are different from the cited art. That is, claim 17 is directed to a process in which a specific slab is produced and processed. Thus, it is submitted that the Examiner's assertion that slight differences in compositions employed would not patentably distinguish the claimed method is misplaced. A *prima facie* case of obviousness requires every element to be taught or suggested by the prior art. In this case, every element of the claimed process is not taught or suggested.

Higo teaches higher contents of Mn in the claimed steel than recited in claim 17. In addition, in Higo, Mn is added for deoxidation and formation of Mn sulphides, while in the present invention it is used for improving quenchability. Further, in the present invention, steel deoxidation is always ensured by Al, the content of which is significant (0.20-0.100%) while in Higo, it can be too low (0.005%) to actually be active in steel deoxidation.

In addition, Claessens and Fujita do not make up for the deficiencies of Higo.

Furthermore, Claessens relies on the combined contents of Cr and Mo for improving quenchability of the steel, whereas the present invention is based on the combined contents of

Mn and Mo. Moreover, it is submitted that there is no express teaching of a cooling rate of the sheet after galvanization in Fujita. Fujita simply states that the galvanized sheet is cooled to room temperature but the cooling rate is not quantitatively specified, whereas such temperature is specified in claim 17.

For at least the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Higo, alone or in combination with the other cited art, does not teach or suggest the present invention according to claim 17.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 17 is patentable over the cited art.

In addition, claims 18-20 depend from claim 17, and thus it is respectfully submitted that these claims are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 17.

In view of the above, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

II. Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below. The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

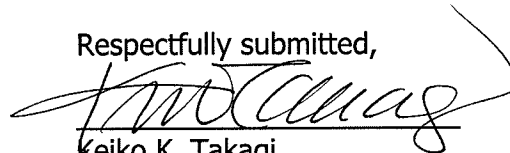
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